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Thank you Mr. Chairman . . .and welcome to Flagstaff.

My name is Deborah Tuck, and I'm here representing the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation . . . the not-for-profit fundraising partner of the National Park Service at the Grand Canyon. Our mission at the Foundation is ***"to preserve, protect and enhance Grand Canyon National Park by promoting citizen stewardship through philanthropy, volunteerism, and broad-based public education and information."***

We pursue that mission by trying to create a better connection between public and place. We want people to know the critical need for the preservation and restoration of fragile desert and riparian ecosystems at the Grand Canyon . . . we want them to appreciate the Park's tremendous biodiversity . . we want them to know the tremendous human history of the Grand Canyon, including the significant history before white men arrived in this hemisphere…. we want them to appreciate the splendid architecture of America's stellar woman architect, Mary Coulter….we want them to experience the awe and wonder of hiking below the rim and floating the Colorado…. and we want them to understand the importance of stewardship for this very special place. We want the general public to understand that ***we all must share*** a stewardship responsibility for our national parks . . . and stewardship builds and strengthens the bonds between people and their parks.

The challenge for the Foundation is that we must redefine the role of stewardship for our national parks . . . because most Americans simply assume that caring for our parks is solely the responsibility of the federal government.

Unfortunately, the truth is that our national parks operate, on average, with just two-thirds of needed funding . . . base funds essential for resource protection, visitors' services, facility operations, facility maintenance, and park support programs. And nationwide, only about 12% of the NPS budget goes toward resource stewardship – including all science, archeological, and historic preservation programs aimed at protecting parks' natural and cultural resources. A business plan study of this park in 2001 found that the annual operating shortfall at the Grand Canyon was $8,500,000 including $1,760,000 for natural resource protection, $1,500,00 for interpretation, and $1,000,000 for maintenance. In short this park operates at 65% of what it needs for daily operating needs. May I ask, sir, how many for profit business would be operating if they had only 65% of what they need for basic operating expenses.

The truth is that the FY 06 budget enacted for the Department of Interior provided the NPS with discretionary appropriations of $2.289 billion . . . or 1.1% ***less*** than what the NPS received in

FY 05 ($2.314 billion). In fact, the Park Service's FY 06 funding level is even about $2 million ***less*** than what the agency received in FY 01 – five years ago.

So what we've seen is a dramatic increase in the number of "friends groups" established to help support projects at individual parks. According to the GAO, these groups – like the Grand Canyon National Park Foundation – now support many of our national parks . . . and their support is an important supplement to federal appropriations.

At Grand Canyon, for example, the Park's annual, federally appropriated operating budget has been roughly $19 million . . . but over the past five years, our Foundation has supplemented that budget with approximately $13.5 million in additional program support. And that total doesn't count the volunteers who donated their time and talents to help support the Park. Last year alone, more than 1,200 volunteers contributed over 49,000 hours to a variety of resource protection projects at the Grand Canyon – that's time valued by the National Park Service at nearly $850,000 . . . in a single year.

But inadequate federal funding is even beginning to limit the ability of the Park Service to properly accommodate those who want to volunteer their time to help protect the resources of the Grand Canyon. A recent example is the Grand Canyon Re-Vegetation Center.

This is a program that has historically been heavily reliant on volunteers; over the past six fiscal years, more than 90,000 volunteer hours . . . labor valued by the Park Service at more than $1.5 million . . . have been devoted to the plant conservation and habitat restoration activities of the Grand Canyon Re-Vegetation Center. Long-term volunteer partnerships have been cultivated with environmental groups (such as the Sierra Club)…with school groups (including university-based organizations around the U.S.)…with youth groups (such as Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops throughout the country)…with service organizations (such as Rotary Clubs and Elderhostel chapters)…and organizations such as the Student Conservation Association and the American Conservation Experience. These volunteers have helped with the management and control of invasive vegetation . . . with the collection of seeds from native plants among the Park's 129 different, and distinct, vegetation communities . . . with the salvaging of native plants in areas adversely affected by development or drought . . . and with the restoration of wildlife habitat.

This past year, staffing shortages at the Park meant that park staff was no longer available to train and supervise volunteers at the Re-Vegetation Center . . . and volunteers had to be turned away. A Boy Scout troop from suburban Chicago that had been volunteering for this program for many years . . . were told not to come this year. Elderhostel volunteers that had made regular trips to the Grand Canyon were told their help couldn't be accommodated this year. A dozen students from Vanderbilt University who had planned to spend their spring break volunteering at the Park . . . were told we couldn't use them, because the Park had no one to train and manage them for ten days.

As a result, volunteer hours for this important program at the Grand Canyon declined from nearly 19,000 in FY 2004, to just over 6,000 in FY 2005 . . . and the very survival of the re-vegetation program is in serious doubt.

Because of the Park's dramatic, 8000-foot elevation gradient, it contains multiple distinct ecosystems . . . with great biological diversity. The Park includes at least 1,500 species of native vascular plants . . . including a dozen endemic plants and 63 that have been given special status by the U.S. Fish &Wildlife Service. It was because of the Park's great diversity of biotic communities, and the NPS management requirement "to maintain native biodiversity" . . . that the Grand Canyon established its internal Re-Vegetation Center in the first place. The Center was intended to ensure the continuing genetic integrity of the native plants found within the Park's distinct vegetation communities.

Closure of this program would mean that all native plants currently being maintained in the Park's nursery/greenhouse would be lost . . . three existing seed fields with genetically-matched grasses growing from native seed (maintained for the Park by the National Resources Conservation Service) would all be plowed under . . . and without the program, ***all*** project volunteers would be turned away.

This Foundation is currently attempting to secure funding to supplement the Park's own resources . . . so that this important re-vegetation and habitat restoration program can be maintained. But clearly, in this instance, we are talking about the Foundation providing the margin of ***survival*** . . . and not a margin for excellence.

Protecting ecological diversity . . . and maintaining the genetic integrity of native vegetation at one of this country's premier national parks . . . ought to be a core responsibility of the Park Service. But if the funding is simply not there . . . then we must make a decision . . . either we try to raise private funds to supplement insufficient federal dollars, or we walk away . . .and let the program die.

So as I said, our challenge is to redefine the role of stewardship . . . as many donors who understand the critical needs facing the Park . . . nevertheless want assurances that their private dollars will not be used to offset public responsibilities. They want us – and the Park – to maintain a ***"bright line"*** between the federal responsibility, and the private opportunity.

But as you can see, Mr. Chairman, that bright line is becoming increasing blurred.

In my opinion, the Park Service's continuing operating shortfall is simply no longer sustainable. Irreplaceable resources are being placed at risk. Parks are facing a critical shortage of field personnel . . . and nowhere is it more evident than in the science, or resource protection, divisions.

At the Grand Canyon, for example, visitation has been steadily increasing – now approaching nearly five million people per year. The threats of negative resource impacts are increasing . . . yet insufficient federal funding has forced the Grand Canyon Science Center to reduce (short-term ***and*** long-term) conservation and resource stewardship efforts. When one compares the funding for the Science Center at this park with the funding for science divisions at other icon parks, funding at the Grand Canyon falls alarmingly short. Funding for science at the Grand Canyon is about 9% of base budget (however the Science Center at the Grand Canyon includes

compliance and planning. In other icon parks, planning and compliance are outside of the science division). Generally funding for science divisions at icon parks in the West averages 14%. In reality funding for science at the Grand Canyon (once planning and compliance funding is subtracted) is half that of Yellowstone. The Science Center receives the smallest amount of funding of any of the field divisions at the park about as much as the shuttle bus operation.

In order to ensure the preservation of the Park's fragile ecosystems, and maintain biological diversity, park managers must have current, objective, science-based data about the resources; yet no comprehensive natural or cultural resource inventories have been conducted. Since 2001, this Foundation has provided almost all of the funding for Grand Canyon National Park to collect the biological data, which is a basic requirement for effective natural resource management.

At the Grand Canyon, there is only one wildlife biologist on staff . . . for a Park covering 1.2-million acres . . . containing several distinct ecosystems within its boundaries . . . and home to at least ten threatened or endangered animal species. Yet, even though the Park provides habitat for threatened or endangered species . . . the Park Service cannot afford to hire staff to monitor those species. In recent years, the Foundation has been the ***only*** source of funding for wildlife protection projects at the Park involving California condors . . . mountain lions . . . desert mountain bighorn sheep . . . . and eight meso carnivore species at both the South and the North Rims.

There are only two archeologists on staff . . . for a Park with approximately 4,500-recorded archeological sites that help tell the story of the Grand Canyon's 10,000-year-old human history. And we know that only roughly 3% of the Park has been adequately surveyed . . . so there may be 50,000 archeological sites yet to be discovered . . . and protected.

And amazingly, at a Park known around the world as a geological wonder . . . there is ***no*** geologist on staff at the Grand Canyon.

Of course, the Grand Canyon is not unique in this regard . . . as park managers across the country are forced to make difficult decisions as they struggle to balance budgets. Insufficient federal funding has forced parks to reduce conservation and resource stewardship efforts so that they can accommodate immediate visitor services and recreational needs.

The Park Service must set priorities . . . and make difficult choices. And for almost the entire 90-year history of the Service, the agency has experienced an internal tension between park management for visitor recreation . . . and park management for ecological and resource protection.

Over this past summer, I had the opportunity to read an insightful book by Richard West Sellars entitled "Preserving Nature in the National Parks" . . . and I would certainly commend it to you, Mr. Chairman, and to your colleagues on this Committee.

At the outset (page 3), Mr. Sellars hits the reader with this observation: *"It might be assumed that management of national parks with the intent of preserving natural conditions would necessarily require scientific knowledge adequate to understand populations and distributions of*

native species and their relation to their environment, and that without such information the parks' natural history is fraught with too many questions, too many unknowns…Yet it has not been the view of park management throughout most of the Service's history…National Park Service decision-making most often has not been scientifically informed."

Again (pages 274-275) Sellars notes, *"The Park Service's long neglect of science [has] crippled its recent research efforts and thus the credibility of its natural resource programs."*

Yet, the Park Service would point out that they have never received such a specific statutory mandate from the Congress; according to the NPS, even though the Organic Act of 1916 called for the parks to be left "unimpaired" for the enjoyment of future generations . . . it did not mandate science-based resource management as a means of achieving that goal.

And because the Park Service ***never*** has enough money to do everything it wants to do….they must make difficult choices….and often chooses between visitor services, and resource protection.

But Sellars concludes his book with a stark warning (page 290): *"In this era of heightened environmental concern, it is essential that scientific knowledge form the foundation for any meaningful effort to preserve ecological resources. If the National Park Service is to fully shoulder this complex, challenging responsibility at last, it must conduct scientifically informed management that insists on ecological preservation as the highest of many worthy priorities. This priority must spring not merely from the concerns of specific individuals or groups within the Service, but from an institutionalized ethic that is reflected in full-faith support of all environmental laws, in appropriate natural resource policies and practices, in budget and staffing allocations, and in the organizational structures of parks and central offices. When – and only when – the National Park Service thoroughly attunes its own land management and organizational attitudes to ecological principles can it lay serious claim to leadership in the preservation of the natural environment."*

After years of chronic under-funding . . . the ***only*** viable alternative for many parks has been to seek partnerships to provide funds from non-federal sources . . . so that critical resource protection needs can be met.

The establishment of the National Park Service in 1916 reflected a national consensus that the natural and cultural resources contained within America's parks must be protected – held in the public trust – and preserved for future generations. The NPS has the difficult task of protecting the complex ecological balances at parks such as the Grand Canyon . . . while still providing recreational opportunities for visitors . . . and doing all of that within severely constrained federal operating budgets.

In my opinion, Mr. Chairman, Congress and the American people need to recognize that their national parks are in serious jeopardy . . . and the irreplaceable natural and cultural resources they contain are imperiled. There are real and imminent threats to the ecological integrity of our parks.

One hundred years ago, our nation's 26th President – Theodore Roosevelt - fought unsuccessfully to have Congress establish the Grand Canyon a national park. He did, however, secure passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906 . . . and he then used that Act to unilaterally protect the Grand Canyon for future generations by declaring it a national monument in 1908. Congress didn't move on the establishment of a national park at the Grand Canyon for another eleven years . . . but Teddy Roosevelt acted – to protect the natural and cultural resources for all time.

While standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon, President Roosevelt said, "Keep this great wonder of nature as it is . . . Keep it for your children and your children's children, and for all who come after you." It is a place that "restores our soul."

The word "conservation" – and the concept of science-based management of resources – did not exist until Teddy Roosevelt became president . . . stopping raids on the public's resources, and creating millions of acres of national forests, parks and wildlife refuges. TR's record was based on a powerful insight that is still relevant a century after his presidency . . . and is an insight that should guide all of us as we consider how we ought to care for our national parks. Teddy Roosevelt knew – fifty years before it became fashionable – that careful environmental stewardship is our collective obligation to future generations. He established America's commitment to conservation . . . reflecting the sense that we must safeguard our national treasures . . . our collective national heritage.

The fact of the matter is that today, we live in an unsettled world . . . and federal budget realities dictate that there is little chance for significant increases in federal funding for our nation's parks. But there ***are*** things that Congress, and the National Park Service, can do to help address the immediate crisis.

First, they need to ***increase*** the internal allocation to science within the Park Service. Science-based management is critical to resource protection. That means that science-based staffing positions must be restored – particularly at the major parks, such as the Grand Canyon.

And we know that privatization, or outsourcing, is not the answer. Protection of resources in our national parks is not a function to be outsourced to the lowest bidder.

Congress can act by restoring the President's Cooperative Conservation Initiative . . . an excellent program that has been left unfunded for the past two years. Through CCI partnerships, citizen stewards were put to work tackling invasive species, reducing erosion along stream banks, and enhancing habitat for wildlife at parks throughout the nation.

Congress can act by passing the National Park Centennial Act – as proposed by Arizona's senior U.S. Senator, John McCain.

And within the Park Service budget, funding equity must be restored among the major, icon national parks . . . both operational funding, and capital funding. The truth is that the budgetary "pain" has not been equally shared among the major parks.

Looking only at the three "icon" parks of the West – Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Yosemite – they collectively received $57.8 million in operational funding in FY 98. Yellowstone received 39% of that "icon" funding total . . . Yosemite received 33% . . . and the Grand Canyon received the smallest share of 28%. Eight years later, that funding gap had grown: by FY 06, Yellowstone garnered 41% of the "icon" total . . . Yosemite stayed at 33% . . . and the Grand Canyon had dropped to only 26%.

The disparity becomes even more pronounced – especially with Yellowstone – when one looks at the capital funding comparisons. Cumulatively, for the period from FY 1998 through FY 2006 . . . the Grand Canyon received a total of $14.67 million in capital appropriations . . . while Yosemite received $18.42 million . . . and Yellowstone received $125.9 million. Further, the NPS is proposing in its current five-year plan (FY 07 through FY 10) to spend $2.5 million in capital funds at the Grand Canyon . . . and a staggering $42.4 million more at Yellowstone.

Certainly, I don't mean to begrudge Yellowstone . . . or any other park . . . for its success in securing federal appropriations to meet its critical needs. But such a dramatic disparity makes it difficult for us . . . as the foundation partner at the Grand Canyon . . . to persuade private donors to support projects at the Grand Canyon . . .when the federal government has spent (or will spend) $150 million ***more*** for projects at Yellowstone over this twelve-year period than they will spend at the Grand Canyon. As a foundation . . . we would need to raise $150 million just to get the Grand Canyon ***even*** on capital project spending.

Those of us in friends organizations also know, and understand . . . that there will be an increasing need for creative partnerships to seek private philanthropy support . . . and an increasing need for citizen stewardship . . . stewardship that can be expressed through financial support or volunteerism within the parks.

Philanthropy has had a long and successful history in the national parks . . . and we're proud of that success. And while we would all like to maintain our insistence on a "bright line" . . . today's budget realities demand that we redefine the role that private philanthropy, and citizen stewardship, can and ought to play.

We ***must*** adapt . . .because the stakes are too important. The natural and cultural resources of our parks ***must*** be protected . . . because if we should lose them, they would be lost forever.

I believe the American people still embrace the Teddy Roosevelt concept of conservation and environmental stewardship. Places like the Grand Canyon are part of our collective heritage . . . and we ***all*** share the responsibility to ensure the protection of these places . . . with all their resources. Wallace Stegner was right "this is the most beautiful place on earth". Thank you for your efforts to help us protect the Grand Canyon.